

Written Testimony for the  
Appropriations Committee, Subcommittee on Health and Hospitals

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Senator Harp, Representative Walker, and Honorable Members of the Appropriations Committee, it is my privilege to address leaders who have shown unwavering dedication to the needs of people with mental illness and addictions. My comments address a serious threat to this mission posed by proposed cuts to the Connecticut Mental Health Center (CMHC) component of the DMHAS budget. I ask you to restore the support for clinical and research programming at CMHC. I request this at a time of great urgency, as the lessons from the shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary School weigh heavily on our minds.

**I. History:** CMHC was founded in 1966 as a collaboration between the Governor of Connecticut, Abraham Ribicoff, and the Chair of the Department of Psychiatry of the Yale University School of Medicine, Fritz Redlich, to provide community-based mental health and addiction treatment to people in the New Haven area, to train mental health professionals, and to conduct groundbreaking basic and clinical research aimed at alleviating the suffering and public health burdens of mental illness and addiction.

**II. Current Status:** This special collaboration continues to this day. In 2013, Commissioner Patricia Rehmer and I work together to make sure that CMHC fulfills its potential as a unique resource for the New Haven community and the State of Connecticut. The State's investment in CMHC research programs is currently paralleled by Yale's investment of endowment income in CMHC faculty, research programs, and facilities. Signs of the success of this collaboration include:

**Outstanding Clinical and Research Programming:**

- CMHC research developed innovative clinical programming including initiatives aimed at the early detection and specialized treatment of individuals with psychotic disorders, including schizophrenia and bipolar disorder.
- The CMHC Division of Law and Psychiatry conducts ground-breaking work that addresses the challenge of criminal behavior committed by the mentally ill.
- CMHC brain research has identified new ways to treat depression, schizophrenia, and substance use disorders, including an antidepressant that may shorten response times from several weeks to several hours.

## **Stimulation of the Connecticut Economy Through Biotechnology Innovation:**

- For each dollar invested by the State of Connecticut, CMHC research programs generate more than \$7 in federal grants (\$24 million annually in grants and contracts); generating important Connecticut jobs. Indirect costs generated by federal grants to CMHC research programs generate approximately \$900,000 for the Connecticut General Fund, these funds would be lost if research programs collapsed in the wake of the proposed cuts.
- CMHC research programs have been a magnet for investment in Connecticut, drawing Pfizer to locate its Clinical Research Unit in New Haven, across the street from CMHC.
- CMHC research programs have spun off biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies including, the Neurogen Corporation, among others.

**III. The Cuts to the CMHC Budget:** Governor Malloy has been a strong advocate for mental illness treatment and biotechnology. However, the Governor's budget would signal an end to the successful DMHAS-Yale collaboration in CMHC as we know it. It would:

- Annualize the 2013 Recissions, cutting \$433,286 from the DMHAS contract with the Yale Department of Psychiatry that supports clinical programs. This cut would eliminate critical clinical programming within CMHC, significantly limiting access to psychiatric care among low-income residents.
- Eliminate \$906,438 in support for the CMHC research programs. This funding supports essential core resources that cannot be charged to federal grants and contracts. Loss of this funding would have devastating effects on these research programs, from which they would be unlikely to recover. It would dramatically diminish CMHC's contributions to advances in treatment. Further, the CMHC missions are inseparable. Cutting research eliminates the contributions of research faculty to teaching and patient care.

**IV. Summary:** The proposed CMHC budget cuts would devastate its clinical and research programming. CMHC is a critical community resource, a flagship of the DMHAS system, a national model, and an engine for the Connecticut economy. It is the research mission of CMHC that has drawn generations of international leaders in psychiatry, psychology, and neuroscience to serve in what is, essentially, a state-supported community mental health center that provides care for the indigent. This unique union of community and university is a national treasure. It is essential to preserve the integrity of the CMHC mission by restoring its funding.